Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine *does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.*

CHEST MEDICINE—Edited by Ronald B. George, MD, Louisiana State University Medical Center, Shreveport; Robert W. Light, MD, Veterans Administration Medical Center, Long Beach, California, and University of California, Irvine, and Richard A. Matthay, MD, Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Conn. Churchill Livingstone Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1983. 657 pages, $49.50,

At a time when several new textbooks have appeared on chest diseases, this is yet another multiple author textbook on chest medicine. According to the authors, the book is designed for use by nursing and respiratory therapy students, as well as housestaff physicians and fellowship trainees in pulmonology and related fields.

The book is organized into three sections: pulmonary structure and function, collecting the data base and clinical patterns of lung disease. The first section deals primarily with physiological principles, is well-referenced and is succinct. Due to limitations imposed by the size of the book, some aspects are covered too briefly, but the references allow the reader to go to other appropriate sources for further details.

The second section on collecting the data base covers the basics of history and physical examination, chest radiology, clinical pulmonary function testing, exercise and disability evaluation, and other diagnostic techniques. Some aspects are dealt with in greater detail than others—computerized axial tomography gets a paragraph, while a radiograph of a barium swallow demonstrating an enlarged left atrium occupies half a page. As with the first section, the references are up to date and pertinent.

The third section of the book on clinical patterns of lung disease covers the expected areas of clinical lung diseases. This section, by virtue of its size, covers some areas in a sketchy fashion, but the ample references make up for these deficiencies.

In conclusion, the book is a good start for the student to be introduced to pulmonary diseases, and the references guide him to selected further reading. Persons more advanced in their training, such as pulmonary fellows, may have to go to the references to get a more detailed account of a specific topic.

S. LAKSHMINARAYANAN, MD
Chief, Pulmonary Section
Veterans Administration Medical Center
Professor of Medicine
University of Washington
Seattle

* * *

BASIC & CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Edited by Bertram C. Katzung, MD, PhD, Professor of Pharmacology, University of California, San Francisco. Lange Medical Publications, Drawer L, Los Altos, CA 94022, 1982. 815 pages, $23.50.

Basic and Clinical Pharmacology, edited by Bertram G. Katzung, MD, PhD, is an entirely new textbook that is available in paperback form. This is one of the Lange Series books and supersedes the *Review of Medical Pharmacology,* by Frederick Meyers, Ernest Jawetz and Alan Goldfein. The book is by no means small (815 pages), but the chapters are concise and readable. This book is not meant to be an encyclopedia of pharmacology. For that, readers are referred to standard pharmacology texts.

Basically, I found the book to be very readable and appropriate to serve as a primary text for a number of pharmacology courses. It includes what many teachers would include in a lecture on certain types of drugs. It does not have the in-depth treatment that is necessary to pursue questions beyond those presented in a lecture or in this book.

Each chapter includes a section on clinical pharmacology of the specific agents that have already been discussed. This appears to be a somewhat artificial separation in that half-life and disposition are included in the "basic pharmacology" and not in the clinical pharmacology section. In general, the clinical pharmacology sections are not terribly useful. They are too brief to really guide therapy. In addition, some of the chapters have overlap in the basic and clinical pharmacology sections within the same chapter. For instance, the chapter discussing vasodilators and angina pectoris discusses the drugs twice and it is difficult to get an overall picture without flipping back and forth between the so-called basic and clinical pharmacology sections. In subsequent editions perhaps this organization should be reexamined.

Nonetheless, the book is an admirable attempt to present a concise and useful compendium of pharmacology. The contributing authors are as outstanding a group as has been assembled for a pharmacology textbook. This book looks like a winner and should be useful for medical students and students in other health professions such as nursing and pharmacy, and as a quick reference for housestaff and practicing physicians.

ALAN S. NIES, MD
Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology
Head, Division of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology
University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
Denver

* * * *

PLATELETS: PATHOPHYSIOLOGY AND ANTIPLATELET DRUG THERAPY—Harvey J. Weiss, MD, Professor of Medicine, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University; Director, Division of Hematology-Oncology, St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, New York. Alan R. Liss, Inc. 150 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, 1982. 165 pages, $22.00.

This slender volume of 165 pages devotes 55 of them to the reference list and index. That fully 25% of a book is devoted to a reference list, suggests that the author, a distinguished platelet researcher, wanted to document each statement with exquisite care. Although he has succeeded in doing so, it is at the expense of readability. The first 70-odd pages are devoted to a fundamental review of platelet physiology, biochemistry and the pharmacology of antiplatelet drugs. A great deal of material is covered, but in a dry, pedantic fashion. In all those pages, there are only six illustrations: one electron micrograph of a platelet, three rather elementary diagrams and two tables. The reader seeking to develop a clearer understanding of the participation of platelets in hemostasis of blood coagulation, or their interaction with the endothelium and its appurtenances, will have to dig it out of text. There is little sense of the dynamic, sequential series of events that occur, and that could be depicted well diagrammatically. Similarly, those seeking an overview of endoperoxide/prostaglandin biochemistry are forced to read rather than *see* the interrelationships. Even for the pharmacology of platelet inhibitors there is no diagram illustrating the site at which the various agents work. It is a matter of style, and Dr Weiss obviously prefers a descriptive rather than an illustrative approach.

The final section of 32 pages critically reviews a series of published studies dealing with the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of platelet inhibitors in cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease. It also has brief paragraphs dealing with various other disorders (for example, thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura and venous thrombosis) for which these agents have been uti-